



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

DECISION NOTICE

Project: East Poplar Shooting Facility

Prepared By

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

June 9, 2006

I. Proposal

This proposed project is located on the Fort Peck Assiniboiné and Sioux Tribes property in Roosevelt County 5 miles east of Poplar, MT, on the NW ¼, NW ¼, Sec. 11, T.27N., R.51E. Development includes a firearms range, archery range & hunter safety confidence course construction & site improvement: construct 25, 100, and 200 yard firearms range with single firing line, archery range and ten station safety confidence course.

II. Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

MEPA required FWP to assess the potential consequences of this proposed action for the human and natural environment. The proposal was detailed in a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) completed by FWP on March 29, 2006. The 30-day comment period for this EA ended May 12, 2006.

Issues raised during the public comment period on the EA are addressed in the Comments section of this Decision Notice. The Draft EA and Decision Notice will serve as the final document.

III. Summary of Public Comment

As of May 12, 2006, FWP has received the following written comment from the Tribal Environmental Office:

Comments: Tribal Environmental Office:

The landfill was closed around 1993, rather than 1983, when the new regulations were put into effect.

Also, there may be no groundwater available for human consumption. The depth to groundwater is deep, probably Judith River, but it is an old class II injection zone for oilfield-produced waters.

Support bringing in dirt as removing the cover could pose problems with infiltration from surface run off and potential release of methane gas, which could pose a problem if your firing bullets into it, I'm thinking explosion scenario, perhaps as a precaution, some soil gas testing should be an option or if you could get some information on landfill gas explosion potential, just as a review.

Response:

FWP acknowledges the correct date of the closure of the landfill 1993.

Based on possible groundwater contamination permits will have to be obtained before this type of development will be included in the grant.

FWP will require dirt to be brought into the project site thus protecting the landfill cap. Based on the following information from DEQ Solid Waste Licensing Project Manager: the amount [of methane] generated is dependent on 3 variables: the amount of garbage present, the moisture content, and the age of the waste. The Poplar landfill # 289 operated for about 10 years and served about 4,000 people. This would mean the landfill only received about 40,000 tons of material. The EPA considers that landfills with less than a million tons of waste in-place do not generate enough methane for waste-to-energy projects. The moisture content in Montana landfills is generally low and tests have shown that they produce less gas than landfills in wetter parts of the country. The production of methane peaks when the refuse is about 2 years old and declines after that over a period of from 10 to 60 years. The landfill has not received waste for 13 years and any production should be well on the decline.

Methane at Poplar could diffuse through the cap and pose problems if it was trapped in structures built on the site. Otherwise the gas should dissipate quickly in the open air.

The landfill is most likely not to produce much gas, and any gas would quickly disperse to below the lower explosive limit in the open air.

Based on this information FWP selects Alternative B and will require the following stipulations to this project– no disturbance of the cap; only structures that would preclude the accumulations of methane can be located on the landfill, and any potable water development will require proper permits.

IV. Decision

After review of the proposal and the corresponding comments, it is my decision to proceed with providing funding through the Shooting Range Development Grant program for range improvements for the East Poplar Shooting Range.

I find there to be no significant impacts associated with this action and conclude that an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed. The completed EA and the response to comments included in this Decision Notice are an appropriate level of analysis.

Thomas Baumeister
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